

TACOMA SCHOOL DISTRICT NO. 10
Tacoma, Washington

Superintendent's Office

ITEM TITLE: School Consolidation **BOARD OF DIRECTORS MEETING:** 11/9/06
Action Session

Goal # 1, 2, 4, 5

BACKGROUND: The Tacoma School District has realized continual enrollment decline since 2001; fall 2006 enrollment of 805 students less than one year ago continues this downward trend. In this declining enrollment environment, it would not be fiscally responsible to place the education of our young people in jeopardy in order to preserve facilities that are not fully populated by students.

In November 2005, a group of Tacoma Public School administrators was asked to compile information on schools that could be considered for consolidation. The charge was to develop a process for making recommendations to the superintendent that would include community input. Data on all elementary schools and middle schools were compiled. Criteria against which each school was considered for possible consolidation were as follows: number of students impacted; capacity of adjacent schools; proximity of adjacent schools; potential boundary shifts; safety; future growth patterns; recentness of construction and plans for future construction; and, transportation and other associated costs.

Several schools were identified through this process. These were the original schools considered by the School Consolidation Advisory Committee that was convened by the Board in January, 2006. The advisory committee brought additional considerations to the deliberations which included ADA compliance, building condition, ethnicity, and free/reduced lunch status. Equipped with additional data, the committee began their decision making process and in February they recommended six schools to the Superintendent for possible consolidation. These were Downing, Grant, McKinley, Washington, Roosevelt and Wainwright.

In response to the concern that the advisory committee was not representative of the entire Tacoma community, the Board provided an opportunity for community members to bring forward additional proposals for consideration. Eleven proposals were heard at the July 27, 2006 board meeting. On September 12, the advisory committee was reconvened to review and comment on the additional proposals. The Superintendent thanked the group for their work and informed them of the next steps in the process.

CURRENT CONSIDERATION: The Superintendent and staff conducted an extensive review of all prior recommendations and proposals. It is believed that the consolidation of the schools identified below most effectively addresses the district's financial concerns and best serves the academic needs of the students at this time.

Consolidate Grant and Jefferson Elementary Schools – at the Jefferson site:

Current K-5 headcount enrollments at Grant and Jefferson are 345 and 186, respectively. By merging the two attendance areas as currently defined, the total enrollment becomes 531 students.

Currently, Jefferson's student capacity is 450. However, the school is built with expansion capabilities. While current classroom spaces accommodate 450, the core facilities (i.e., cafeteria, library, etc.) are designed for 550 students. This design was created intentionally with future growth possibilities in mind.

In the short term, placing 2 or 3 portables on the Jefferson site and relocating several programs will ameliorate potential over-enrollment. A benefit that is created by several of these program moves is greater continuity for students. This is especially true for special education program students. For example, a Pre-K autism and a primary autism class will be relocated at a school that currently has an intermediate autism classroom. By locating these classrooms in the same school, students will attend the school in grades K through 5. Currently, there are two Therapeutic Learning Centers located at north end schools and none that serve the mid-Tacoma/Fircrest area. The Therapeutic Learning Center at Jefferson will be relocated to a school in this area to better meet the needs of students who have not benefited by having this program in the community in which they live. In addition, two Headstart classrooms will be moved to schools in areas that are currently underserved. Two classrooms that are currently being used for Werlin administrative offices will be relocated. From Grant, the K-1 special/basic ed autism classroom will be relocated to a school that will then serve K – 3 students. The pre-school special education class will be moved to another north end school location that will better serve those students.

Another measure that has been employed at district schools when enrollment is expected to exceed capacity is to limit the number of students who can use Optional Enrollment to "opt" into another school. In the past, the district has been quite liberal with respect to "optional enrollment" requests. However, these practices will need to be closely monitored. While current Jefferson and Grant students will be guaranteed enrollment, limitations may have to be placed on the number of incoming Kindergarten students. Siblings of students who are currently enrolled will be grandfathered. One final measure under consideration, given this recommendation is to pilot a new program at Franklin Elementary School. A new highly capable model would enrich Franklin and support its new increased enrollment.

Long term plans may include the addition of a classroom wing at Jefferson. This would eliminate the need for portables on that site. The district's current capital budget will absorb these costs. The capital budget does not impact the district's operating budget.

Consolidate Gault and McIlvaigh Middle Schools – at the McIlvaigh site:

The Superintendent has the right to consider consolidation possibilities that were not previously recommended. The consolidation of Gault and McIlvaigh middle schools is one that developed when the Gault site was determined as unfeasible for a K-8 school. With current enrollments at Gault and McIlvaigh at 358 and 460, respectively, combining these two schools and creating a new 750 – 850 capacity middle school gained favor with the review team. Construction of the new school will be on an aggressive schedule. This will be achieved by

using the design used for Giaudrone Middle School. This will provide a savings on architectural design.

Suggesting placement of the new school on the McIlvaigh site instead of the Gault site overcomes a number of obstacles. One major obstacle is the size of the Gault site. Currently, Gault sits on 7.4 acres which is too small to accommodate middle school academic program and activities. In order to gain the needed acreage, permits from the city would be needed to close a public street. This street runs down the middle of what would become the new campus. The purchase of several private homes adjacent to the site would be necessary as well. These costs are significant. There are no costs such as this related to the McIlvaigh site.

A benefit of this consolidation is that the relocation of Gault students will not be necessary while the new facility is being constructed. They will be housed on the site that will eventually become their new school. Creating a new school at the 27 acre McIlvaigh site eliminates the need to relocate students because the positioning of the new school would allow construction while students are attending the current McIlvaigh Middle School.

It is theoretically possible to combine the attendance of Gault and McIlvaigh and accommodate current student enrollments in an 850 capacity school. However, the current middle school prototype design is for 750 students. To reduce the number of potential students at the new school on the McIlvaigh site, minor boundary adjustments are proposed.

The administrative team enlisted the expertise of the Edulog Corporation to assist in determining the enrollment impacts of these potential adjustments. It was determined that the portion of Gault's attendance area that is west of McKinley and north of 38th could become incorporated into Stewart's attendance area. A minor portion to Stewart's attendance area (south of 72nd) would need to be shifted into the Baker attendance area. (See attached map.) The net result of the revised McIlvaigh/Gault attendance area would be an enrollment of 750 students. Stewart's enrollment would increase by approximately 50 students (currently 564) and Baker would add approximately 30 additional students (currently 664.)

The new middle school at the McIlvaigh site would be funded by reallocating funds previously approved by the voters for the replacement of Gault. RCW 28A.530.020 provides a legal process by which this transfer of funds can occur.

FISCAL IMPLICATION: Subject to further analysis and planning, at this juncture, the estimated cost for adding 2 or 3 portable classrooms at Jefferson is \$50,000 - \$75,000. There is also an anticipated need to modify one of the classrooms at Jefferson by installing a dance floor which is not expected to exceed \$10,000. These will be one time only capital expenditures. Current bus service to the Jefferson and Grant service areas is sufficient to handle the consolidation so no additional costs are anticipated for transportation. There will likely be an increase for utilities serving the additional portables, however, the cost is not considered significant.

Most of the initial cost to implement the McIlvaigh/Gault consolidation will be one time only capital expenditures. It will be necessary to add as many as 8 to 10 portable classrooms to the McIlvaigh campus at an estimated cost of \$300,000 - \$350,000, as a temporary measure until the new school is built. Some of that cost may be mitigated with additional time to study possible modifications to existing McIlvaigh facilities. The portables are readily available

elsewhere in the district alleviating the need to purchase them from outside sources. It is estimated that transportation costs will increase by approximately \$220,000. Half of this cost will be state funded, resulting in a cost to the district of \$110,000.

As a result of these consolidations, the estimated savings for the district is \$750,000.

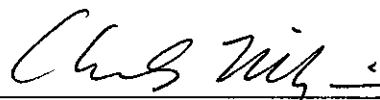
SUPERINTENDENT'S RECOMMENDATION: The Superintendent recommends that the Board of Directors approve the scheduling of pre-closure hearings to be conducted for the purpose of a 2007-08 school year consolidation of Grant Elementary School and Jefferson Elementary School at the Jefferson school site; and, for Gault Middle School and McIlvaigh Middle School at the McIlvaigh school site and that the two pre-closure hearings occur at Grant Elementary School on December 12 at 10:00 a.m. and 6:00 p.m. and at Gault Middle School on December 13 at 10:00 a.m. and 6:00 p.m.

Submitted by:



Karen Dickinson, Associate Superintendent
For School Support K-12

Approved for submission to the Board of
Directors



Charles D. Milligan, Ph.D.
Superintendent of Schools

**Tacoma School District
School Consolidation**

Demographics

| School/Area | Current Enrollment | | | | District Totals* |
|----------------------------|--------------------|--------------------|---------|--|---------------------|
| | Edulog Data | | | | |
| | PSA Resident | Optional/ Other | Totals* | | |
| Mcllvaigh (existing) | 328 | 106 | 434 | | 457 |
| Gault (existing) | | 40 | 40 | | 40 |
| Gault (east) | 231 | | 231 | | 242 |
| Mcllvaigh/Gault (proposed) | 559 | 146 | 705 | | 739 |
| | | | | | |
| Stewart (existing) | 320 | 231 | 551 | | 564 |
| Stewart (south of 72nd) | (27) | | (27) | | (27) |
| Gault (west) | 76 | | 76 | | 76 |
| Stewart/Gault (proposed) | 369 | 231 | 600 | | 613 |
| | | | | | |
| Baker (existing) | 527 | 114 | 641 | | 663 |
| Stewart (south of 72nd) | 27 | | 27 | | 27 |
| Baker/Stewart (proposed) | 554 | 114 | 668 | | 690 |
| | | | | | |
| Grant (existing) | 104 | 231 | 335 | | 345 |
| Jefferson (existing) | 78 | 106 | 184 | | 186 |
| Jefferson/Grant (proposed) | 182 | 337 | 519 | | 531 |

** Any deviation in Edulog and District data is due to "incorrect" or "invalid" addresses not depicted on Edulog maps; however, Edulog and District numbers are consistent and reliable. For planning purposes, the higher numbers are utilized.*

School Consolidation

Pros and Cons of Recommended Schools

| Schools | Pros | Cons |
|---------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------|
| Grant to Jefferson | Supported by most of Grant community | Need to add 2-3 portables |
| | Simple boundary consolidation | |
| | Large classrooms for arts focus | |
| | Safe parent pick-up area | |
| | New, beautiful facility | |
| | Core allows for facility expansion | |
| | No additional transportation costs | |
| | Better special ed program alignment | |
| | Portables are available in the district | |
| | | |
| Gault to McIlvaigh | *Can construct new middle school on same site | Need to add portables |
| | Doesn't impact Gray project schedule | Requires boundary changes |
| | Places new east side middle school on property that has lots of acreage which allows for creative programming | Uncertain impact of Salishan development |
| | Special Ed programs remain where students reside | |
| | State law allows for shift of capital monies | |
| | Portables are available in the district | |

*This is a long term savings of \$40,000,000 to renovate McIlvaigh Middle School

**Tacoma School District
Middle School Attendance Boundaries**

Proposed Realignment

